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**M'Clintock on the Articles Published in the  
Episcopal Recorder - 1837**

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**OBSERVATIONS**  
ON THE  
ARTICLES PUBLISHED  
IN THE  
**EPISCOPAL RECORDER.**

OVER THE SIGNATURE OF  
"A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS."

BY  
**THOMAS M'CLINTOCK.**

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NEW-YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY ISAAC T. HOPPER.

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1837.

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## PREFACE.

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THE two articles to which the following observations relate, appeared in the Episcopal Recorder, published in Philadelphia, in the sixth and seventh months, 1836. They were occasioned by the republication in that paper of a Letter of John Wilkinson, of Upper Clapton, England, addressed to the monthly meeting of Friends at Chesham, resigning his membership in the Society. They are understood to be the production of Thomas Evans, of Philadelphia, a prominent member and writer among that division of the Society of Friends called Orthodox, author of "An Exposition of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers," &c.

The "Observations" were commenced a few weeks subsequent to the publication of the articles in the Recorder, but being at the time engaged in preparations for removing from the city to the western part of the state of New York, leisure did not present for their completion till on the way out on the canal. And since our location at our present residence, an indispensable application to business has occasioned a postponement of them till the present period. They are now published as a testimony to the truth, and in the hope that not only the writer of the articles, but those with whom he

stands connected, may perceive their departure from "first principles," and be willing to retrace their steps, and by an acknowledgment of the truth and a full belief in the sufficiency of that holy foundation on which the church of Christ ever has been, and only can be built and sustained,—the rock of immediate Divine revelation,—they may be prepared to exalt the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in that strength and integrity which characterised the early members of the Society, who were made, in the Divine hand, so effectually instrumental in calling the attention of their fellow men to this everlasting and sure foundation.

Nothing, I am undoubtingly persuaded, but a departure from this foundation, or the want of coming to a practical recognition of it, has led to the adoption of those views, and the spirit of opposition consequent on them, which have resulted in a separation of the Society. It has been a departure from fundamental ground, and the adoption of principles adverse to that ground, that have led to this and all the deplorable results which have marked the history of the Society for the last fifteen years. The case of John Wilkinson, Isaac Crewdson, and many other distinguished members of the Society in England, and in this country, furnish a striking and unequivocal illustration of the tendencies and effects of the principles adopted. Enough, surely, to induce those with whom they have stood in connexion as leading co-adjutors, and who now proclaim their disunity with them, not only to pause

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and reflect, but to abandon the "broken cisterns" which they "have hewed out to themselves," and cleaving to "the Fountain of living waters," acknowledge with boldness and magnanimity the truth. For that they have been all, or generally so, *one in the ground*, must be obvious to every impartial and enlightened observer. The same spirit animates and the same principles characterise all their publications, from the day that they arrayed themselves in hostility against that excellent and dignified minister of the everlasting gospel, Elias Hicks. Wilkinson, Bates, and others, have only carried out these principles to their legitimate results.

It will be perceived from the style and address of the "Observations," that they were intended for publication in the Episcopal Recorder, the paper in which the other articles appeared. The length however, to which the remarks have been extended, and a want of opportunity to consult the Editor of that periodical, have induced their publication in the present form. That the reader may have a full and just view of the whole subject, the Letter of Wilkinson and the two articles under notice, precede the "Observations."

*Waterloo, 4. Month, 30, 1837.*





tion of certain connexions indispensable; and after much deep and very painful consideration, I am fully convinced of the necessity of my withdrawing from the Society of Friends.

It is many years since my eyes were in some measure opened, to see the Holy Scriptures in a very different point of view from that in which, it seems to me, the Society has always regarded them; and it is now about seven years since I felt a powerful and enduring conviction of the absolute necessity of gratefully accepting Holy Scripture, not as a *secondary* rule, but as the *THE RULE* of faith and practice.

Now I believe this acceptance of Scripture was brought about in me, by the operation of the Holy Spirit upon my heart; because it was accompanied by such a view of my own state as a poor, undone and helpless sinner; and of the offices of our adorable Saviour and of the Holy Spirit, as I had never before been able to take. The cardinal doctrine of justification by faith, was also more and more clearly opened to me, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful.

It was not long after the change of view I have mentioned relative to the Scriptures, that I became convinced that the "fundamental principle" of the Society of Friends, and that of those who now go under the denomination of Seceders or Hicksites, is one and the same. I had before imagined that these unhappy and misguided persons had departed from the distinguishing principle of the Society of Friends, but alas, **one** common root supplies them both; the

legitimate fruit of the one being only more conspicuous and undisguised than that of the other.

This conviction was forced upon me very unexpectedly, by reading the 2nd section of Robert Barclay's 3rd Proposition; which, while it professes to uphold the Scriptures as heavenly and divine writings, virtually destroys their authority, by setting above them the Spirit, which is supposed to be in the heart of every man, whereby even the Scriptures themselves may be tested. Now it appears to me, that there never was a more fertile source of error broached in this fallen world ; and where such a principle is held, it only requires some particular excitement to make it productive of the worst imaginable fruit.

The discipline of Friends has served to keep up that moral decency, for which they are admired by the world, and on account of which they also hold themselves in estimation ; but this is only "making clean the outside of the cup and of the platter ;" for unless, by the grace of God, Holy Scripture be accepted as the rule of faith and practice, there can be no sound internal principle of action ; because it is by faith in what God has been pleased to reveal through the Apostles and Prophets, which the Apostle speaks of as the foundation upon which all true Christians are built, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, whereby the whole body of believers (represented by a spiritual temple) are consecrated.

If then the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets

is that upon which, and upon which only, all true believers rest their faith: Jesus Christ himself, as the Rock of Ages, supporting the whole, it is clear that inward and immediate revelation, as both Friends and the Seceders from them understand it, is an utter fallacy; and to build faith upon what is imagined to be inwardly revealed, is nothing better than a delusion. I speak of this most feelingly; because I am fully persuaded that such a notion, when calmly and patiently examined by the light of Holy Scripture, will be found to lead directly to Deism. It appears to me indeed to be worse, inasmuch as it is Deism with a fallacious gloss thrown over it; whereby the unhappy person who is deluded by it, fancies himself to be really a Christian, because he believes in what he calls revelation, and supposes that he has Christ within him as an inward principle; but alas for him in the day of trial!—His “faith” is no better than a broken reed, which pierces the hand that leans upon it. Tens of thousands have, I fear, thus been lulled until they have slept the sleep of death.

When, by the unmerited mercy of God, I was roused by the consciousness of this awful state of things, it was my endeavour to point it out, especially to those who had most influence in the Society; and for a time I indulged the hope that in this country at least, Friends would be warned against retaining a principle, which had manifestly produced such devastation in Ireland, as well as on the other side of the Atlantic; but I am now obliged wholly

to abandon the hope, that *as a Society*, Friends will ever receive the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice, because I see to my indescribable sorrow, that whilst on many public occasions, they are shaping their language so as to give an idea of their full reception of Holy Scripture, they still cling, if possible, more closely than ever, to the ruinous fallacy of the paramount authority of their own inward and immediate revelation. Ministry also is constantly brought to the test which is furnished by the writings of the "early Friends," not to that of Holy Scripture. The books too, which in the present controversy, meet with very extensive acceptance among those who must be considered as having the chief influence in the Society, I can only look upon as being wholly *subversive* of the Gospel; whilst at the same time, the publications, and the preaching, which tend to promote the cause of the Gospel, are as generally discouraged, and as much as possible put down.

But as if to place this matter beyond question, a publication which is directly levelled against Hicksism, and by appropriate quotations from the Holy Scriptures, clearly shows its contradiction of Gospel truth, it is said by the generality of Friends, to be secretly aimed against their principles: thereby, as every reasonable and unprejudiced person must see, identifying their principles with those of the Hicksites. The excellent author of the Beacon, (the publication to which I allude) as a mark of their disapprobation of the work, has lately, it seems,

been silenced "for the present," as a minister, by the committee of the Yearly Meeting, who are appointed to visit the Quarterly Meeting, of which he is a member. But this mark appears to me to give an honorable distinction to the Christian man on whom it is placed, and at the same time fixes a stigma on those who have dared to wound the cause of the Gospel by such a stretch of authority; for they have not been able to lay their fingers on a single sentence in "the Beacon," which they have ventured openly to condemn.

I therefore feel myself conscientiously bound to renounce a profession, which I believe to be incurably hostile to the Gospel; but at the same time that I request you no longer to consider me as a member of the Society, I can most truly say that my controversy is with principles, not with persons; neither do I presume to judge individuals; but my heart's desire and prayer to God is, that for Jesus Christ's sake, every member of the Society may, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, be enabled to lay hold on the word of the truth of the Gospel; and thus, by true repentance, and a Scriptural faith in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, may be made a partaker of that salvation which comes through him alone.

Indeed, my beloved Friends, I cannot by any words express the affectionate and earnest solicitude I feel, that you may throw aside with holy indignation the mischievous traditions of men—and receive with childlike simplicity the truth, which

God has so graciously and so clearly revealed in Holy Scripture. And let me assure you, that notwithstanding the separation now made between us, which will prevent my voice from being again heard among you to proclaim the truth of the gospel, yet my prayers to God for you will continue to be put up in secret.

But allow me most solemnly to remind you, that the numerous and sufficient warnings you have had, not only by the plain statement of truth, but by the incontrovertible evidence of the delusive nature of the principles you profess, must necessarily bring upon you an aggravated condemnation, if such warnings are disregarded. Look, I beseech you, with an intelligent and impartial eye, to Ireland, to America, and though last, not least, to this country, for evidence of the destructive effects of these deadening principles. I entreat you, therefore, not to count me "your enemy because I tell you the truth," but believe me to be your faithful and affectionate friend,

JOHN WILKINSON.

*Upper Clapton, 2d of 2d Month, 1836.*

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*From the Episcopal Recorder, of June 11, 1836.*

In the number of the Episcopal Recorder for May 28th, 1836, there is copied from the Bucks County Intelligencer, a letter of John Wilkinson to the Monthly Meeting of Friends, at Chesham, in England, which I have read with no less pain than surprise. The writer of this extraordinary document, has seen fit to charge upon the religious Society of

Friends the most gross heresies, to represent them as deistical in their opinions, as one in principle with "the Seceders or Hicksites," as entertaining for truth "utter fallacy" and "delusion," and hypocritically framing their doctrinal phrases so as to convey a seeming belief of Holy Scripture, while in fact they deny their authority.

That these accusations are of the most serious character cannot be denied, and if true would justly deprive Friends of any claim to the name of Christians and consign them to the company of such men as Paine and Voltaire. But happily they are no less false than they are grave. The motives which influenced the writer in making them, I shall not pretend to examine, but content myself with the remark that it is no unusual thing for those who turn away from the faith to endeavour to apologize for their own apostacy by placing others in the wrong. Every reader must be struck with the want of that charity which constitutes one of the loveliest features of the Gospel, in thus consigning "tens of thousands" of members of a society of professing Christians to "the sleep of death," and placing them beyond the hope of that salvation which comes by Jesus Christ. Well for them that God is their Judge and not this man.

Before I enter on a refutation of the charges, I would invite the attention of the reader to one fact.—The whole stress of the letter, and the force of all the foul aspersions it contains, lie in this, that the Society of Friends believe in the sensible influ-

ences of the Holy Spirit on the mind of man, as a guide and enlightener in spiritual and divine things. This is their "delusion," an "utter fallacy," which leads directly to Deism, and is even worse than Deism itself. But while branding this blessed doctrine of Holy Scripture with these opprobrious epithets, he himself admits its truth and makes it the very cause of the recent change in his sentiments, by declaring that he was taught by these very influences of the Spirit to receive "the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice." "Now I believe," says he, "this acceptance of the Scripture was brought about in *me by the operation of the Holy Spirit on my heart.*" Here is the identical doctrine of Friends, for the holding of which he pronounces them without the pale of the Christian fold, as enemies to the Gospel of Christ, and scarcely within reach of the redemption that is in Christ.

I object to the manner in which the words "fundamental principle" are used in the letter, because it would seem to imply that, as a Society, we have but one fundamental principle, or that we exalt the doctrine of the operations of the Holy Spirit to the disparagement of other parts of the Christian faith. The truth is, that we hold all the great doctrines of Christianity, as set forth in the Bible, to be fundamental, and embrace them as a harmonious and consistent whole; and among these we cordially receive and embrace the promise of our dear Lord to send the Holy Spirit as the comforter. See John xvi. 7, 8, 9 and 13.—"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth," &c.

That the fundamental principles of the Society of Friends and of the Hicksites "are one and the same," as asserted in the letter, is manifestly false, from the fact, that differences on *fundamental doctrines* gave rise to the late schism, by which the Hicksites rent themselves from the Society. Friends not only efficiently testified against and denied their principles, but disowned from their communion all those who persisted in adhearing to them. They are as totally distinct as any two denominations can be, and their principles on many essential points the very reverse of each other.

The Society of Friends fully believe in the doctrine of the fall of man, of his entire depravity, that in him dwelleth *no good thing*, that he is utterly incapable of delivering himself out of this fallen and undone condition, and hence the absolute need of a Saviour and deliverer. That this Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared at Jerusalem, and there suffered death as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of a lost world. In all that is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the birth, life, miracles, precepts, doctrines, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation, and second coming of this adorable Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Society do sincerely and unfeignedly believe. They believe the Holy Scriptures to have been given by divine inspiration, that they are the only inspired record of Christian doctrines, and the only fit judge and test of the soundness of religious opinions, and that whatever is contrary thereto, whether in doctrine or practice,

ought to be rejected as false. Is this Deism? Is this "fallacy and delusion," and subversive of the Gospel? Let the Christian reader judge between us. As a member of that Society, intimately acquainted with its doctrines and practices, I do most solemnly repel the dreadful charges and insinuations which the writer of the letter makes. I abhor the very idea of the Deism and deceptions which he would most uncharitably and most unjustly put upon us, and will yield to no society in the estimation we place on the blessing of the Holy Scriptures, and the reverence and joy with which we receive Christ Jesus the Lord as the Redeemer and Saviour, the common sacrifice for our sins, our mediator and advocate with the Father.

Permit me to transfer to the columns of the Recorder as an answer to the calumnies thus heaped on us, a short document drawn up by the Society in 1689, and presented to parliament, which they were pleased to accept as the solemn declaration and faith of the Society. It is in the form of question and answer,—viz :—\*

\* I consider this document, to say the least, of very doubtful authority. George Whitehead gives a very particular account in his Journal, of the proceedings of Friends in relation to the passage of the Act of Toleration in 1689, but makes no allusion to this declaration of Faith; and I cannot find that either Sewel or Gough makes any mention of it. It can hardly be supposed that such an important feature in the history of those transactions would have been passed over unnoticed.

The document which, George Whitehead says, Friends "did propose and humbly offer" to Parliament on that occasion, and "which they were pleased to accept, as the solemn declaration and faith of the Society," is in these words, viz : "I profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, his eternal Son, the true God, and

**"Question.** What is your belief concerning the blessed Trinity, as our term is ?

**"Answer.** Our belief is, that in the unity of the Godhead, there is Father, Son and Holy Ghost ; being those three divine witnesses that bear record in heaven ; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are one, according to Holy Scripture testimony.

**"Q.** Do you believe the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, or that Jesus Christ is truly God and man ?

**"A.** Yes, we verily believe that Jesus Christ is truly God and man, according as Holy Scripture testifies of him ; God over all blessed for ever, the true God and Eternal Life, the One Mediator between God and men, and even the man Christ Jesus.

**"Q.** Do you believe and expect salvation and justification by the righteousness and merits of Jesus Christ, or by your own righteousness or works ?

**"A.** By Jesus Christ, his righteousness, merits and works, and not by our own ; God is not indebted to us for our deservings, but *we to him for his free grace in Christ Jesus*, whereby we are saved through faith in him (not of ourselves) and by his grace enabled truly and acceptably to serve and follow him as he requires : he is our *all in all*, who worketh all in us that is well pleasing to God.

**"Q.** Do you believe in remission of sins, and re-

in the Holy Spirit, one God blessed for ever : and do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the old and new Testaments, to be given by Divine inspiration." He afterward remarks that, "*We were therefore of necessity put upon offering the said confession*, it being also our known professed principle, sincerely to confess, Christ the Son of the living God, his divinity, and as he is the eternal word : and that the three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, are *one : one Divine being, one God, blessed for ever.*" See G. W. Journal, p. 635. See also the 12th Sec. of the Act of Toleration. I. T. H.

demption through the sufferings, death and blood of Christ?

"A. Yes, through faith in him, as he suffered and died for all men, gave himself a ransom for all, and his blood being shed for the remission of sins ; so all they who sincerely believe and obey him, receive the benefits and blessed effects of his suffering and dying for them ; they by faith in his name receive and partake of that eternal redemption which he hath obtained for us, who gave *himself for us*, that he might redeem us from *all iniquity*, he died for our sins and rose again for our justification ; and if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.— 1. John i. 7.

"Q. Do you believe and own the Holy Scriptures, contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, to be given by Divine inspiration, and to contain all matters of doctrine and testimony, &c. necessary to be believed and practised in order to salvation, and peace with God ?

"A. Yes, we do, and by the assistance of the grace and good Spirit of God, which gives the true understanding of the mind of God and meaning of Holy Scripture, we desire always to live in the faith, knowledge and practice of them in all things appertaining to life and godliness : Holy Scripture being given by Divine Inspiration, is profitable for doctrine, correction and instruction, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, able to make the man of God wise unto *salvation*, through faith in Christ Jesus."

Such is the value which the Society place on the Holy Scriptures, that in all their meetings for discipline they are required to give explicit answers to the query, whether parents are " careful to bring

up their children in the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures and to be good examples in this respect themselves?" The discipline of the Society makes it disownable to deny the authenticity or validity of the sacred volume, and has the following clause on the duty of parents, viz :—

"We tenderly and *earnestly advise* and exhort all parents, and heads of families, that they endeavour to instruct their children and families in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion as contained in the Scriptures; and that they excite them to the diligent reading of those excellent writings which *plainly set forth* the miraculous conception, birth, Holy life, wonderful works, blessed example, meritorious death, glorious resurrection, ascension and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to educate their children in the belief of those important truths as well as in the belief of the inward manifestation and operation of the Holy Spirit on their own minds, that they may reap the benefit and advantage thereof, for their own peace and everlasting happiness, which is infinitely preferable to all other considerations :” p. 100.

I could go on and quote volumes of official testimony in vindication of the Society of Friends from the charges of Wilkinson, but I deem it unnecessary. His letter has been ably replied to, and its unfairness fully exposed, by Samuel Tuke, of York, in England; to which I would refer for further information.

Before closing, I may just say that the “high estimation” in which John Wilkinson is stated to have been held, must have been confined to a very small range. A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

## (EDITORIAL REMARKS.)

## John Wilkinson's Letter.

This letter was sent to us for insertion, and being presented as the record of "an occurrence of interest," the suggestion was complied with, though without the slightest intention of affirming that Mr. Wilkinson's strictures on the doctrines of the Society of Friends were correct. Considering, however, that few of our readers have the means of testing their correctness, it would have been well if we had so stated, and we are gratified that a highly respected and intelligent correspondent has put it in the power of our readers to judge for themselves upon the subject. We must however add, that he seems to us to have made Mr. Wilkinson's charges more offensive than they really are. We understand him to speak chiefly of *one* principle, and only of the *tendency* of that principle. He would doubtless say, if possessed of any candour, that this tendency is resisted and counteracted by the influence of other principles, among *very many* of those with whom he has been recently connected.

The only point which seems to us to be involved in this question, is with respect to that principle of the Society of Friends, which Mr. Wilkinson designates as "the fundamental principle of the Society." Our correspondent has shown that the designation properly speaking is incorrect, but we apprehended his meaning to be equivalent to that of the *distinguishing principle* of the Society. Is it not true that the Society has a doctrine with respect to the in-

fluence of the Holy Spirit, different from those entertained by the generality of Christians? And if so, *what is the peculiarity?* If our correspondent will furnish us with a clear statement on this point, he will afford us, and probably most of our readers, information which we confess that we do not now possess.\* What, for instance, is the fact with respect to Mr. Wilkinson's assertion that "the 2nd section of Robert Barclay's 3rd proposition, while it professes to uphold the Scriptures as heavenly and divine writings, virtually destroys their authority, by setting above them the Spirit, which is supposed to be in the heart of every man, whereby even the Scriptures themselves may be tested." What does our correspondent mean by "the *sensible* influences of the Holy Spirit?" What is intended by the declaration in one of his quotations that the Holy Spirit "gives the true understanding of the mind of God, and meaning of the Holy Scripture?"

We propose these inquiries with entire candour, desiring only to elicit truth. It may seem to some that the subject is one with which we have nothing to do. It is however important, for many reasons, that the leading doctrines of different societies of Christians should be known to each other, not as matters of controversy, not to excite uncharitable feelings, but on the contrary, for the promotion of true

\* The declarations of our correspondent in his own language, with respect to the doctrines of the Society of Friends, have great weight with us, but of course they will not be received by our readers as an authoritative exposition of its creed, and even if thus considered, they appear to leave room for the inquiries which we propose.

charity, based on *truth*. The peculiarities of most denominations of Christians may be easily ascertained, and when this is the case, we do not feel called upon to notice them. In the present instance our attention has been called to a point upon which we do not feel competent to speak. A brief statement with respect to it (and we contemplate nothing more,) from one so competent to speak as our correspondent, will doubtless do good.

It is stated in the London Morning Herald that Mr. Wilkinson has connected himself with the Church of England. His letter appears to have excited considerable attention, in consequence of some recent controversy in England with respect to the principles of the Society of Friends. Their orthodoxy, especially in regard to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, has been defended, among others, by Joseph John Gurney, a member of the Society, whose writings are well known and highly esteemed.

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From the Episcopal Recorder, of July 30th, 1836.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The writer of the strictures on John Wilkinson's letter acknowledges the kindness of the editor of the Episcopal Recorder in giving them a place in his columns, and as far as he may be able, will cheerfully comply with his request, by stating explicitly the belief of the Society of Friends on the subject of the influences of the Holy Spirit.

As the natural estate of man in the fall is totally degenerate and depraved, and all the motions of his

will and affections inclined to evil, so he possesses no power or capacity by which he can turn from evil to good, or raise himself out of his fallen condition into favour with God. And not only so, but his heart, under the power of the prince of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience, is *averse* from those offers and means of help, which in the mercy and goodness of his Creator are provided for his redemption. In this view of the subject, the condition of man, if left to himself, would be utterly helpless and without hope. But God who made him had mercy on him, and graciously provided a remedy for his forlorn and lost creature, by which he might be redeemed from the power and pollution of sin and restored to the favour and acceptance of his Creator. "He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." In the fulness of time appointed by the Father, Jesus Christ his Son, the Saviour of the world, came and suffered the ignominious death of the cross, as an atonement and propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind. In pursuance of this glorious plan, the Apostles preached remission of sins and eternal redemption to our fallen race, on the terms of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." But in vain would the glad tidings of this salvation be proclaimed to a corrupt and depraved race, were man left to the unassisted efforts of his own reason. The terms and the means are alike despised and contemned by him,

unless the Holy Spirit enlighten his darkness, show him his lost and wretched condition, set his sins in order before him, incline him to repentance, and lead him to prayer, the gospel is offered to him in vain. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." If the thoughts of his unregenerate heart "are only evil and that continually," it follows that nothing of his own, or belonging to his nature, can lead him to good; and consequently in the whole work of redemption, from the first conviction for sin until the salvation of the immortal soul is consummated, the Holy Spirit must be the efficient agent. Numerous are the passages in the sacred volume which establish this conclusion. Our blessed Lord himself, when speaking to his disciples respecting his departure to the bosom of the Father, whence he came forth, told them he would not leave them comfortless, but "would pray the Father and he should give them another Comforter, that might abide with them for ever, even the Spirit of Truth;" "and when he is come, says he, he will reprove (or more correctly *convince*) the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." Again, "he will guide you into all truth," "he shall take of mine and show it unto you," "he shall teach you all things." It is a standing doctrine of the gospel, and one which our Lord especially enforced in the parable of the vine and the branches, that "*without him we can do nothing*;" "he that abideth in me and *I in him*, the

same bringeth forth much fruit, but as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." If, therefore, we "be servants of God and have our fruit unto holiness, the end whereof is everlasting life," we must both abide in Christ, and know him to dwell in us by the Spirit, to govern, direct and sanctify all that we do, to his praise and glory. The apostle Paul declares respecting himself and fellow believers, that they "walked not after the flesh but after the Spirit," that they "were not in the flesh, but *in the Spirit*," that "*the Spirit of God dwelt in them*," and that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God." "Ye have an unction, (saith John the divine,) from the Holy One and ye know all things"—"the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, which is truth and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

I might fill pages with quotations from the Bible, all showing the offices of the Holy Spirit in awakening, teaching, guiding, enlightening and sanctifying the Christian; and indeed the doctrine is so interwoven with the very nature and structure of the gospel as a spiritual heart-changing religion, that I know not how we can hope to realize its blessed

effects, but by dwelling and walking in the Spirit. I think it cannot be questioned that those influences of the Holy Spirit by which such wonderful effects are produced in the mind of man, must be *sensible*, or *perceptible* to the subject of them—for a man to be convinced of sin, to be enlightened, taught and guided by influences which he neither perceived nor was sensible of, would seem to involve an absurdity.

The lamentable effects of the fall of man were not limited to his moral feelings—his reason, the noblest faculty of the soul, partook of the general corruption and acquired a bias to the side of error which in a greater or less degree swayed all its decisions. It is this dereliction which renders the things of the Spirit foolishness to the natural man, and precludes him from the knowledge of them, except as the films of error and the veil of prejudice are rent, and the natural blindness and darkness of the heart illuminated by the Holy Spirit. With these views before us, it is not difficult to perceive what the Society of Friends mean, when they say “that the Holy Spirit gives the true understanding of the mind of God, and meaning of Holy Scripture.” They mean to assert what the apostle Paul declared, that the spiritual things are to be spiritually discerned, and that being foolishness to the fallen reason of man and not received by it, an influence from on high, even the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit, is necessary to enable him truly and savingly to understand the mind of God, and mean-

ing of the Holy Scriptures. For "what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God—and we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Such is the doctrine which Robert Barclay advocates in the second proposition of his Apology, and whether he be justly chargeable with "destroying the authority" of the Holy Scriptures, the following extract from that section of his work may serve to show, viz :

"We do look upon them (the Holy Scriptures) as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians, and that whatsoever is contrary unto their testimony, may *therefore* justly be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies, as the judge and test. We shall, also be very willing to admit it as a positive, certain maxim, that whosoever any do, pretending the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil."

To the objections that "men may add new Scriptures of equal authority with the old," or that "every one may bring in a new gospel according to his fancy," he answers, "We have shut the door upon all such doctrine in this very position, affirm-

ing that the Scriptures give a full and ample testimony to all the principal doctrines of the Christian faith. For we do firmly believe there is no other gospel or doctrine to be preached but that which was delivered by the Apostles, and do freely subscribe to the saying, Let him that preacheth any other gospel than that which hath been already preached by the Apostles, according to the Scriptures, be accursed."

If I understand the doctrine of the Church of England on the influences of the Holy Spirit, it is substantially the same with that of the Society of Friends. The peculiarity of the latter consists, I apprehend, in a more practical and extended application of the doctrine to their religious callings and performances, as well as the every-day duties of life.

God is a spirit—the soul of man is spirit also, and aside from the testimony of Holy Scripture, it seems to me perfectly reasonable to believe that the Creator would open and preserve a channel of communication between himself and the creature he has made, corresponding with their immaterial natures. To suppose the contrary, that all direct intercourse between God and the soul has ceased, and that the written word is the only revelation of his will or medium of communication, is to place us in a situation less favourable than the subjects of the Mosaic dispensation, for in addition to the inspired writings of the Old Testament, they had the Shekinah in the most holy place, whence the mind of God was communicated to the high priest and by him to the peo-

ple; they had prophets also and prophetesses, to whom the divine will was revealed respecting things present and to come, and they had those inspired penmen who wrote the sacred Scriptures. Is the dispensation of the gospel less glorious and perfect than the law, or is it not rather its peculiar characteristic and glory that this divine influence is now shed forth more abundantly on the human race than was then generally the case? If it be not so, what means the prophecy of Joel, ch. ii. 28, quoted by Peter (Acts ii. 17.) "And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit." The prophet Jeremiah in contrasting the old and new covenants says of the latter, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts," "and they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

Our blessed Saviour in the last great day of the feast, published this gracious invitation, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The evangelist in explaining the meaning of our Lord,

assumes, as a doctrine commonly received and known, the affusion of the Holy Spirit on those which believed in the Lord Jesus. "This spake he, says John, of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The apostle Peter, after quoting the passage from Joel, and preaching repentance and remission of sins, concludes with these remarkable words, "And ye shall receive *the gift of the Holy Ghost*; for *the promise* is unto you and to your children, and to *all* that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The apostle Paul no less clearly sets forth the outpouring of the Spirit under the Gospel dispensation in his excellent epistles, a single quotation from which will serve for the present. After speaking of the sinful state of himself and some of his fellow believers before they received the Gospel, he says, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration and *renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*"

The Gospel is not changed—pre-eminently as the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred on the Apostles, a degree of its blessed power and influence is essentially necessary to the conversion and growth in grace, of every Christian. We must be regenerated—born again of the Spirit, washed and sancti-

fied by it, and made meet for an inheritance among the saints in light. The religion of the Apostles and their fellow believers must be our religion, if ever we are saved; and if it was necessary for them to live in the Spirit—to walk in the Spirit—to be led by the Spirit, to be taught by the Spirit—no less spiritual religion will do for us. “Are we so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are we now made perfect by the flesh?” Nay, rather, whatever may be our name to religion, let it be our daily prayer to attain to the experience of the Corinthians, of whom the Apostle testifies, “Ye are washed—ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

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To the Editor of the Episcopal Recorder.

I have recently perused the remarks published in the Recorder of 6th month 11th, and 7th month 30th, on J. Wilkinson's Letter of resignation, by a writer who signs himself “A member of the Society of Friends:” and I may truly say, that I have read them with equal astonishment and regret—astonishment that a writer who calls himself, “a member of the Society,” and professes to be “intimately acquainted with its doctrines and practices,” should inculcate principles which, to my view, are as directly subversive of the fundamental principles of Quakerism, as those of John Wilkinson himself;—and regret that such doctrines should be attempted to be imposed on the readers of the Recorder, or on

any other portion of the community, as the doctrines of the Society of Friends. By a brief examination of the positions he has taken, it will be apparent, I think, that he has incorrectly represented the views, both of John Wilkinson and the Society he professes to advocate.

After some preliminary observations of no very courteous character, in relation to Wilkinson; the writer proceeds to tell us, in his third paragraph, that "the whole stress of the letter, and the force of all the foul aspersions it contains, lie in this, that the society of Friends believe in the sensible influences of the Holy Spirit on the mind of man, as a guide and enlightener in spiritual and divine things. This is their 'delusion,' an 'utter fallacy,' which 'leads directly to deism,' and is even 'worse than deism itself,' " &c.

Now here, I conceive, is an entire misrepresentation of the views of J. Wilkinson. The stress of his objections to the doctrine of Friends relative to the scriptures, and to what he truly terms their "fundamental principle," does not lie in the fact that they "believe in the sensible influences of the Holy Spirit," or that it is "a guide and enlightener in spiritual and divine things." He says not a word about *sensible* or *insensible* influences, nor against believing in the spirit "as a guide and enlightener," &c. It is probable he would admit all these. Indeed he appears to do so in the passage noticed by thy correspondent, in which he says, that he believes his "acceptance of the scriptures *as the rule*, was

brought about in him by the operation of the Holy Spirit in his heart." The stress of his objection to the Society plainly consists in this, that he has seen, as he apprehends, "the absolute necessity of gratefully accepting the holy Scriptures, not as a *secondary* rule, but as *the rule* of faith and practice," while the society believes the immediate revelations of the Holy spirit in the mind to be the *primary* rule of faith and practice, and the scriptures but *secondary* and *corroborative* ; regarding this Divine light or holy Spirit, (as Barclay explains in the 2d sec. of the 3d prop. of his Apology, and elsewhere,) as the "fundamental principle," the original source of truth, capable of infallibly instructing in it, without the intervention of men or books, and that by which only a certain knowledge can be attained as to what is truth, whether found in the scriptures, or any other writings : or, as John Wilkinson chooses to express it, "while it [the society] professes to uphold the scriptures as heavenly and divine writings, *setting above them, the spirit*, which is supposed to be in the heart of every man, whereby even the scriptures themselves *may be tested*." And this, in his estimation, "virtually destroys their authority," but in our view establishes their truth and authority on the only sure basis on which they can be established ; the evidence of the spirit being the only true authority of the scriptures to every individual mind. And this is the doctrine which Friends taught, and emphatically and strenuously insisted on in the beginning, and is that which is and

must be acknowledged, I conceive, by every true Quaker to the present day.

But from this ground thy correspondent appears to me to be as remote as John Wilkinson himself ; and, in fact, while ostensibly opposing him, is, to all intents and purposes, advocating the same principle—lands precisely on the same ground.—Let us hear him further. “ But while branding this blessed doctrine of holy scripture with these opprobrious epithets, he himself admits its truth and makes it the very cause of the recent change in his sentiments, by declaring that he was taught by these very influences of the spirit to receive ‘ the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and practice.’ ‘ Now I believe,’ says he, ‘ this acceptance of the scripture was brought about in me by the operation of the Holy spirit on my heart.’ “ *Here,*” says thy correspondent, “ *is the identical doctrine of Friends,* for the holding of which he pronounces them without the pale of the Christian fold, as enemies to the gospel of Christ, and scarcely within reach of the redemption that is in Christ.”

Indeed ! is it the doctrine of Friends, that “ the influences of the spirit,” or “ the operations of the Holy spirit on the heart,” teach us to “ receive the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and practice ?” This may be the doctrine of Episcopalians, of Methodists, or of Presbyterians, but it is very far from being the doctrine of Friends. They believe, (all true Friends,) and ever have believed, the testimony of the spirit in the heart is to be *the rule*, the

only sure, primary, and all-sufficient rule, the rule or test of all rules ; and the testimony of the scriptures, and all external testimony whatever, they believe to be but collateral and confirmatory. Friends believe in a rule which existed before the scriptures were written, and which will exist, a sufficient director to every mind, should the scriptures be annihilated.

But agreeably to John Wilkinson and thy correspondent, deprived of the scriptures, Christians must be without a rule ! The Holy spirit, *per se*, cannot teach us the path of duty, cannot enable us to walk in acceptance with our gracious Creator. Its office is merely to "teach us," or, by an "operation on our hearts," to bring about in us a conviction that "the holy scriptures are the rule." "To build faith upon what is imagined to be inwardly revealed, [independently of the scriptures,] is nothing better than a delusion."

I may here advert to what appears to me a little unfairness in thy correspondent's statement of J. Wilkinson's views in the passage under notice. J. W. says that "it is now about seven years since he felt a powerful and enduring conviction of the absolute necessity of gratefully accepting Holy scriptures, not as a *secondary* rule, but as the rule of faith and practice," and that he believes "this acceptance of scripture was brought about in him by the operation of the holy spirit on his heart."

Thy correspondent, in stating John Wilkinson's views has seen proper to omit the words "*not as a*

*secondary rule*”—not wishing perhaps that his agreement with Wilkinson in this point also should be perceived by a certain class of his readers. But, a very little attention to the premises he has assumed, will show that his views in the matter, are “the identical doctrine” of John Wilkinson. In his essays he as clearly sets the scriptures, or *something else*, above the immediate teachings of the Holy spirit, as John Wilkinson has done; he tells us, for example, the Society of Friends “believe the Holy scriptures to have been given by divine inspiration, that they are *the only inspired record of Christian doctrines*, and the *only fit judge and test of the soundness of religious opinions*.”—Did the world ever before hear such a declaration from the lips or pen of a Quaker! A more entire renunciation of the first principles of Quakerism could not be made. This is not only sweeping away completely the idea of the spirit being the primary rule or guide in the things which concern salvation and eternal life, but it is renouncing all faith in any present revelation of God to the soul of man, independent of the scriptures. For if the scriptures are “the only inspired record of Christian doctrines,” it follows that there has not been since the apostolic age, such a revelation of God to the spirits of his children, as could enable them to make a record of Christian doctrines. In fact, it follows conclusively, that there has been no such thing as immediate revelation at all since the last tract of scripture was penned! For if there has been such

a thing as a revelation from God to the mind of man, its object most undoubtedly must have been to teach him something; it must have *taught*, and that which is taught is "*doctrine*." This is the meaning of the word; and that which was taught, could be *recorded*, or written down. A revelation that should teach nothing would be a useless revelation indeed. And without such a revelation as shall render the subjects of it (if capable of writing) able to make an "inspired record of Christian doctrines," where is the Christian's ground of certainty with regard to any one truth—with regard to either faith or practice?—Suppose it to be a truth, as thy correspondent and J. W. assume, that "the influences of the spirit teach us to receive the scriptures as the rule of faith and practice," is not here at least one truth that is taught by the spirit? and would not a record of this truth be an inspired record? and have not both thy correspondent and J. W. made this record?—a record which, so long as it stands, must be, to every intelligent observer, a conclusive evidence of their apostacy from Quakerism! and in my view, of their defection from the first principles of the gospel of Christ.

Nor is the assertion less so, that the scriptures are "the only fit judge and test of the soundness of religious opinions." Properly speaking the scriptures cannot be a judge at all. A judge must necessarily be an intelligent agent, one capable of exercising discrimination, of comparing and exhibiting evidence, and of giving a decision or judgment re-

specting that which is the subject of examination or inquiry. But the scriptures, in the reason and nature of things, are possessed of no one of these properties. So far as the truth of their testimony is concerned, they are the subject not the agent. And as regards truth in the abstract, they are but a witness or testimony concerning it, and require to be compared with all other witnesses, with all other testimony which is brought within the scope of our perceptions. And the highest evidence we can have is obviously the testimony of the Holy spirit in the mind. Because this proceeds from a witness of unlimited attributes, one infinitely perfect, one incapable of corruption from human depravity or ingenuity. The testimony of this witness, therefore, is that by which all other testimony must be *tested*, and only on account of its correspondence with this must it be received, or can it be received with divine certainty. For this, as Robert Barclay states, is "*PRIMA VERITAS, the first and original truth*"—"the truth itself: i. e. that whose certainty and authority depend not upon another." And he illustrates and enforces the subject by this rational simile and conclusion: "When we doubt of the streams of any river or flood, we recur to the fountain itself; and having found it, there we desist, we can go no farther, because there it springs out of the bowels of the earth, which are inscrutable. Even so, the writings and sayings of all men *we must bring to the word of God*, I mean the *ETERNAL WORD*, and if they agree hereunto, we stand

there. For this word always proceedeth, and doth eternally proceed from God in, and by which *the unsearchable wisdom of God*, and unsearchable *counsel and will* conceived in the heart of God, are *revealed unto us.*"

A very different doctrine this, surely, from that taught by thy correspondent, that "the scriptures are the only inspired record of christian doctrines, and the only fit judge and test of the soundness of religious opinions." Unless indeed, "the unsearchable wisdom of God," and his "counsel and will," can be "revealed to us," and we yet incapable of making an inspired record,—or unless we may be in possession of all these and still unacquainted with Christian doctrines!—Or unless, again, this Holy spirit shall be in us and reveal to us his counsel and will, and yet we not permit him and his revelations to us to be the fit judge and test of the soundness of religious opinions!—

But let us hear Barclay a little further in this matter. "That whereof the certainty and authority depend upon another, and which is received as truth because of its proceeding from another, is not to be accounted the principal ground and origin of all truth and knowledge. But the scriptures' authority and certainty depend upon the spirit, by which they were dictated, &c. Therefore they are not the principal ground of truth."

Again. "That which is not the rule of my faith in believing the scriptures themselves, is not the primary adequate rule of faith and manners. But the

scripture is not, nor *can it be* the rule of that faith by which I believe them, &c. Therefore &c. But as to this part, we shall produce divers arguments hereafter. As to what is affirmed, that *the spirit*, and *not the scriptures, is the rule*, it is largely handled in the former proposition; the sum whereof I shall subsume in one argument, thus: If by the spirit we can only come to the true knowledge of God; if by the spirit we are to be led into all truth, and so be taught of all things; then the spirit, and not the scriptures, is the foundation and ground of all truth and knowledge, and the primary rule of faith and manners."

And again. "The principal rule of *Christians* under the gospel is not an outward letter, nor law outwardly written and delivered, but an inward spiritual law, *engraven in the heart, the law of the spirit of life, the word that is nigh, in the heart and in the mouth*. But the letter of the scripture is outward, *of itself a dead thing*, a mere declaration of good things, but not the things themselves. Therefore it is not, nor can be, the chief or principal rule of Christians."

These explicit declarations of Robert Barclay are taken from the 2d section of the 3d proposition of his apology, to which J. Wilkinson refers, and respecting which thou requested information of thy correspondent, but which, so far as I can perceive, he has altogether failed to furnish. After reading them I think thou wilt be surprised at the conclusion at which he appears to have arrived, that "the doctrine of the church of England on the influences

of the Holy spirit, is substantially the same with that of the society of Friends." Is it not the acknowledged and professed doctrine of the church of England, that immediate revelation is now ceased, and that God having committed his will to writing in the scriptures of the old and new Testaments, these constitute the primrry rule of faith and practice? And is there no substantial difference between this and the doctrine of Friends!—

But, instead of noticing any of these clear and strong positions of Barclay, or at all attempting their defence, was it fair and candid in thy correspondent, to quote from another section of the Apology than the one in question, a passage calculated to make a different impression, and, in the detached form in which it is given, an impression, adverse to the leading doctrines taught by Robert Barclay throughout his work, and as I will presently show, evidently adverse to his true meaning and intention. Thy correspondent says, the extract he has furnished, is "from that section" of the work. But this is not correct. It is from the seventh, not the second section: and more than this, a material part of a sentence is omitted.

After some remarks, either totally irrelevant, or at variance with his former positions, that "the scriptures are the only inspired record of Christian doctrines," &c. He thus introduces the extract: "Such is the doctrine which Robert Barclay advocates in the second proposition of his Apology, [I presume he meant to say the second section of the

3d proposition,] and whether he be justly chargeable with 'destroying the authority' of the holy scriptures, the following extract *from that section of his work* may serve to show, viz: 'We do look upon them (the holy scriptures,) as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians, and that whatsoever is contrary unto their testimony, may *therefore* justly be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we never refused nor ever shall, in all controversies, [Robert Barclay's words are, "in all controversies *with our adversaries,*"] as the judge and test. We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, that whatsoever any do, pretending to the spirit, which is contrary to the scriptures be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil."

The object of thy correspondent in this quotation appears to be, to make the impression, in opposition to Wilkinson, that Robert Barclay and the Society of Friends believe the scriptures to be the highest authority, the ultimate standard of appeal with regard to the soundness of religious opinions and practices. In short, that so far from *setting the spirit above the scriptures*, by considering *it* and its revelations to the mind the primary rule, "that by which even the scriptures themselves are to be tested," as alleged by Wilkinson; Barclay, and the Society admit the scriptures as the supreme and final test both of doctrine and practice. This, at all events, is the obvious inference, I think, which

would be deduced by any person, unacquainted with the writings of Barclay and the principles of the society, on reading the passage in the detached and imperfect form in which it is given by thy correspondent. And that this is the inference he intended should be deduced, must be apparent, I conceive, from the following considerations.

1. He nowhere tells us what Robert Barclay deemed *the authority* of the scriptures to be.

2. He is totally silent with regard to all the clear and strong passages with which Barclay's work abounds, calculated to show his real sentiments on the subject. 3. While the very pith of Wilkinson's objection, which he is endeavouring to remove, is, that Robert Barclay, although he "professes to uphold the scriptures as heavenly and divine writings, virtually destroys their authority, by *setting above them the spirit*, which is supposed to be in the heart of every man, whereby even the scriptures themselves may be tested," thy correspondent says not a word in defence of the spirit being the primary rule and test of scripture. 4. He tells us positively in his previous essay, that the scriptures are "the only inspired record of Christian doctrines, and *the only fit judge and test* of the soundness of religious opinions."

Now, that the doctrine taught by Robert Barclay in his *Apology* is as opposite to this as are the north and south poles to each other, must be sufficiently apparent, I think, from the passages I have already quoted from the 2d section of his third pro-

position. But that this may be still more manifest, I will produce a few more from other parts of his work. And first, as to the authority of the scriptures. I will begin with a short extract from the proposition itself.

“Because they are only a declaration of the fountain and not the fountain itself, they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Yet because they give a true and faithful *testimony* of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the spirit, *from which they have all their excellency and certainty*. For *as by the inward testimony of the spirit, we do alone truly know them*, so they testify that the spirit is that guide by which the saints are led into all truth.”

In the first section of his arguments and illustrations, he thus speaks: “As we freely acknowledge that their *authority* doth not depend upon the approbation or canons of any church or assembly; so neither can we subject them to the fallen, corrupt, and defiled reason of man. And therein as we do freely agree with the Protestants against the error of the Romanists, so on the other hand we cannot go the length of such Protestants as make their authority to depend upon *any virtue or power that is in the writings themselves*, but we desire to ascribe all to that spirit from which they proceeded. We confess indeed there wants not a majesty in the style, a coherence in the parts, a good scope in the

whole ; but seeing *these things are not discerned by the natural, but only by the spiritual man*, it is the spirit of God that must give us *that belief of the scriptures which may satisfy our consciences.*"

After some quotations from Calvin, and the confessions of several churches, in which the correctness of these views is conceded, Barclay continues :—  
 "By all which it appeareth how necessary it is to seek the certainty of the scriptures from the spirit, and *nowhere else*. The infinite janglings and endless contests of those that seek *their authority elsewhere*, do witness to the truth hereof."

From these passages it is clear, that according to Robert Barclay the only true authority of the scriptures is the spirit ; that the scriptures in themselves possess neither virtue nor power, and that it is only from the testimony of the spirit in the heart that we can obtain a satisfactory belief of them.

Barclay then proceeds, in the 2d section, with the explicit positions and arguments before quoted, showing that, as the spirit of God is the fountain of all truth and knowledge, and its revelations to the mind, the only ground of certainty in divine things, so "the writings and sayings of all men" are to be brought to this test. But that there may be no doubt with regard to Barclay's views, whether the scriptures or the evidence of the spirit in the heart be the ultimate test of truth, I will cite two more passages from his apology. The first is from his 2d prop. on immediate revelation, as follows :—

Moreover, these divine inward revelations, which

we make absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith, neither no nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the scriptures, or right and sound reason. Yet *from hence it will not follow*, that these divine revelations *are to be subjected to the test*, either of the outward testimony of the scriptures, or of the natural reason of man, as to a *more noble or certain rule and touchstone* ; for this divine revelation, and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing *by its own evidence and clearness*, the well disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto, even as the common principles of natural truths do move and incline the mind to a natural assent."

The second is from his 3d proposition on the scriptures. After showing the insurmountable difficulties, to which those are subjected, who refer to any other ground of certainty than the evidence of the spirit, in regard to errors incident to transcription, translation, &c.—He proceeds:—

"Through, and by the clearness which that spirit gives us, it is that we are only best rid of those difficulties that occur to us concerning the scriptures. The real and undoubted experience whereof I myself have been a witness of, with great admiration of the love of God to his children in these latter days : for I have known some of my friends, who profess the same faith with me, faithful servants of the Most High God, and full of divine knowledge of his truth, *as it was immediately and inwardly revealed to them by the spirit*, from a true and

living experience, who not only were ignorant of the Greek and Hebrew, but even some of them could not read their own vulgar language, who being pressed by their adversaries with some citations out of the English translation, and finding them to *disagree with the manifestation of truth in their own hearts*, have boldly affirmed the spirit of God never said so, and that it was certainly wrong; for they did not believe that any of the holy prophets or apostles had ever written so. Which when I on this account seriously examined, I really found to be errors and corruptions of the translators; who, (as in most translations,) do not so much as give us the genuine signification of the words, as strain them to express that which comes nearest to that opinion and notion they have of truth."

These passages, I think it will be admitted, are sufficiently explicit of Barclay's views on the subject, both as regards doctrine, and its application to practice. The question will now probably occur to some of thy readers, how are the views contained in these and the preceding quotations to be reconciled with those expressed in the passage cited by thy correspondent, in which Robert Barclay seems to admit, that all doctrine and practice which is contrary to the scriptures, may on that account justly be rejected as false and reckoned a delusion of the devil? This is a query which naturally suggests itself, from a view of the passage in the partial form in which it appears in the extract of thy correspondent. But by taking it in connexion with the

context, &c., a fair view of the whole ground occupied by Barclay, the sentiments émbrced in it are, in my apprehension, very easily reconcileable with those contained in his other writings. In order to a correct understanding, it will be necessary that I insert the passage, with its context, as found in the Apology—viz.

“ In this respect above mentioned then, we have shown what service and use the holy scriptures, *as managed in and by the spirit*, are of to the church of God ; wherefore we do account them a secondary rule. Moreover, because they are commonly acknowledged by all to have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and that the errors, which may be supposed by the injury of time to have slipt in, are not such but that there is a sufficient clear testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith, we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians ; and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary to their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them ; which we never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and test. We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, that whatsoever any do pretending to the spirit, which is contrary to the scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil. For as we never lay claim to the spirit’s leadings that we may cover ourselves in any thing that is

evil; so we know, that as every evil contradicts the scriptures, so it doth also the spirit in the first place, from which the scriptures came, and whose motions can never contradict one another, though they may appear sometimes to be contradictory to the blind eye of the natural man, as Paul and James seem to contradict one another."

Here it is to be observed. 1. That in this and other passages in which R. B. speaks of the scriptures under the character of a "secondary rule," that whose testimony the present revelations of the spirit can never contradict, &c.; we are to understand, not the scriptures collectively, but "the holy scriptures," "the scriptures of truth," such portion of the writings contained in the Bible as really have proceeded from the Holy Spirit, in which the "clear testimony to the truth" is contained. Thus, at the very beginning of his proposition on the scriptures he says,—from these revelations of the spirit of God to the saints, have proceeded *the scriptures of truth*, which contain a faithful historical account, &c. But Barclay never meant to say, (nor would any man in his sober senses,) that the scriptures as we have them, have all thus proceeded. On the contrary he exhibits at some length in his *Apology* his reasons for believing that many errors "have crept in," both by transcription and translation, and instead of following the common version of 2 Tim. iii. 16, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," &c., he translates it,—*"all scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable," &c.*

And speaking of the translation of the Bible in general use in this country and England, he says expressly that divers passages "are corrupted and perverted." (Works, Vol. 1. p. 456.) This is a distinction which should be carefully borne in mind.

2. That according to Robert Barclay, it is only from our experience of the operations of the Holy Spirit in ourselves, that we can truly understand or profit by them, or be assured that the scriptures, or any part of them, have proceeded from the Spirit ; their usefulness wholly depending on their being "managed in and by the spirit." "This," says he, in the very paragraph preceding the passage in question,—"*This is the great work of the scriptures, and their service to us, that we may witness them fulfilled in us, and so discern the stamp of God's spirit and ways upon them, by the inward acquaintance we have with the same spirit and work in our hearts.*" The prophecies of the scriptures are also very comfortable and profitable to us, as the same spirit enlightens us to observe them fulfilled and to be fulfilled ; for in all this it is to be observed, that *it is only the spiritual man that can make a right use of them.* They are able to make the man of God perfect, (so it is not the natural man,) and whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for *our comfort, our*, that are the believers, *our*, that are the saints ; concerning such the apostle speaks : for as for the others, the apostle Peter plainly declares, that the unstable and unlearned wrest them to their own destruction," &c.

When, therefore, Barclay says, that "whatsoever doctrine is contrary to their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false, he obviously means, their testimony, as confirmed to us by the evidence of the spirit, "from which," he tells us, "They have all their excellency and certainty," and "by the inward testimony of which we do alone truly know them."

The plain amount of Barclay's views is this. "The testimony of the spirit is *prima veritas*, the first and original truth, that which is sufficient and clear by itself, forcing the well disposed understanding to assent," &c. But the testimony of the scriptures of truth, in harmony with the revelations of the Holy Spirit in the heart, are also a confirmation and comfort to us, and may therefore be considered a secondary rule, subordinate to the spirit. And as the testimony of the spirit is one in every mind, the many excellent declarations and true testimonies found in the scriptures in harmony with the present revelations of God's truth to the soul, have produced a general acknowledgment that they have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and since, notwithstanding "the errors which may be supposed by the injury of time to have slipped in," there is a sufficient clear testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith,\* they may be regarded as the only suitable, "*outward* judge, (or more

\* R. B. elsewhere says, that "the principal or fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion are contained in the tenth part of the scriptures." Prop. 3., page 106.

properly, *test*) of controversies among Christians.”\* And Barclay and his friends were willing, “in all controversies *with their adversaries*” to meet them on this ground, satisfied that they could amply sustain their principles, by an appeal to that standard which they all recognized. But we are not to construe this as an admission on the part of Robert Barclay and his friends, that the scriptures are the highest standard of appeal. On the contrary it is to be regarded purely as a matter of condescension to the weakness of their opponents, who were not prepared to recognise a higher standard. And on this point we are not left to construction. Here again Barclay is explicit.

“We trust to and confide in this spirit,” says he, “because we know and certainly believe that it can only lead us aright, and never mislead us ; and from this certain confidence it is that we affirm, that no revelation coming from it, can ever contradict the scriptures’ testimony, nor right reason. Not as making this *a more certain rule to ourselves*, but as *condescending to such*, who not discerning the revelations of the spirit, as they proceed purely from God, *will try them by these mediums*: Yet those who have their spiritual senses, and can savour the things of the spirit, as it were *in prima instantia*, i. e. at the first blush, can discern them without, or before they apply them either to scripture or reason.

\* R. B. does not say, as does thy correspondent, that he “looks upon them as the only fit judge and test of controversies :” but “the only fit *outward* judge,” &c.

Just as a good astronomer can calculate an eclipse infallibly, by which he can conclude (if the order of nature continues, and some strange and unnatural revolution intervene not,) there will be an eclipse of the sun or moon such a day, and such an hour; yet can he not persuade an ignorant rustick of this, until he visibly see it. So also a mathematician can infallibly know, by the rules of art, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; yea, can know them more certainly than any man by measure. And some geometrical demonstrations are by all acknowledged to be infallible, which can be scarcely discerned or proved by the senses; yet if a geometer be at the pains to certify some ignorant man concerning the certainty of his art, by condescending to measure it, and make it obvious to his senses, it will not thence follow, that that measuring is so certain as the demonstration itself, or that the demonstration would be uncertain without it."—R. B. Apology pp. 63, 64.

Further, or more demonstrable proof than is contained in the preceding extract, surely cannot be asked of the truth of the assertion before made, that R. Barclay's willingness to have his own doctrines and those of his brethren tested by the scriptures, was purely in condescension to his opponents, to meet them on their own ground.—"Not as making this, (either the scriptures or unaided reason of man,) a more certain rule to ourselves, but as *condescending to such*, who not discerning the revelations of the spirit, as they proceed purely from

God, *will try them by these mediums,*" &c. Indeed, it is impossible, with Barclay's views, he could mean otherwise in what he has expressed.—To what did Barclay and his friends attribute their knowledge or understanding of the truths contained in the scriptures? Clearly, to the revelations of the Holy Spirit in their own minds. And on what did they depend for unfolding those truths to others, but on the revelations of the same spirit? Independently of this divine immediate revelation, did the scriptures in their view express any certain language? or was there any thing so settled between Friends and their opponents, as to the meaning of scripture, as to afford a common undisputed standard or umpire, to which they could respectively appeal? By no means. The scriptures therefore could not be such a standard. The controversy between them, so far as scripture was concerned, must hence necessarily resolve into a matter of construction on both sides. And would Barclay and his friends be so unwise as to accept the constructions of their opponents as the true language of scripture? Had they done this they would soon have been *unchurched* and *unchristianed* too. They would truly have been "unbaptized infidels." For did they not differ *toto cælo* with their opponents, in regard to what constituted gospel baptism, the supper, and many other points deemed equally important? No, Friends were not so weak as to accept either the constructions of their opponents as the true meaning of scripture, or the scriptures

themselves, by whatever means understood, as the highest rule, test, or standard of truth, to which the revelations of the spirit in their own minds were to succumb. William Penn had not thus in vain written his excellent treatise to show, that the rule of faith and practice and judge of controversies, is the spirit; nor had Robert Barclay in vain declared, that they desired "to ascribe all" to this same Holy Spirit, "from which the scriptures have *all their excellency and certainty.*"

Friends accordingly claimed the privilege of understanding the scriptures for themselves agreeably to the light afforded them by that spirit, from whom all holy scripture has proceeded, and they were prepared to bring all scripture "to this eternal word," as the rule and test, "and if it agreed hereunto to *stand there.*" And some "faithful servants of the most High God, full of divine knowledge of his truth, *as it was immediately and inwardly revealed to them by the spirit, from a true and living experience,*" when they found passages in the Bible "to *disagree* with the manifestation of truth in their own hearts, "were prepared boldly to affirm that the spirit of God never said so, and that it was certainly wrong."

Moreover, Robert Barclay and his friends well knew, that notwithstanding the clamour among Christian professors about the scriptures being *the rule*, it is in reality, even with those who most sincerely regard them in this light, *every man's particular apprehensions of the scriptures, that is his*

*rule.* And therefore they were willing that those clear and rational views of religious truth, which had been unfolded by the Holy Spirit to their own minds, should, confirmed by the many accordant testimonies which they found in the scriptures, address themselves, (to use one of their common phrases,) to "the witness for God in every soul." "Although I read the scriptures," says Geo. Fox, "that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew him not *but by revelation*, as he who hath the key did open, and as the Father of life drew me to his Son by his spirit," &c. Jour. p. 7.

And William Dewsberry, one of George Fox's early and most faithful fellow laborers, bears a like testimony: "This I witness to all the sons of men, that the knowledge of eternal life I came not too by the letter of the scripture, nor hearing men speak of the name of God."—p. 54. Similar testimonies might be multiplied. This was the foundation on which George Fox and his fellow believers built, the immediate revelation of the Father, by his *Son* or *holy spirit*, terms with them, as regarded the Divine nature, perfectly equivalent. They "ascribed all," both doctrine and practice, "to the spirit."

But to return to Robert Barclay. A few words more in explanation of his meaning, in the latter part of the extract, in which he says, "we shall be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, that whatsoever any do *pretending to the spirit*, which is contrary to the scriptures, be accounted

and reckoned a delusion of the devil." Barclay wished to remove or guard against an apprehension, which some were disposed to entertain and urge as an objection to Friends' doctrine, viz. "That if the spirit and not the scriptures is admitted as the primary rule, then any, under pretence of being led by the spirit, might plead permission to indulge in immoral and unrighteous practices." This consequence, Robert Barclay shows, by no means follows from the doctrine. For, as all such evils are opposed to the testimony of *the scriptures of truth*, so are they to that of "the spirit in the first place." Not that the testimony of the scriptures gives us the knowledge that such practices are evil; we have this from "the spirit in the first place," whose testimony is immutable in every unperverted mind. And the correspondence of many testimonies of the scriptures with this immutable testimony of the spirit, and the general perception of this correspondence, having, as already observed, given to those testimonies, among Christian professors, a degree of sanctity and deference which pertains to no other writings; and as Friends were far from a disposition to "lay claim to the spirit's leadings, that they might cover themselves in any thing that was evil," so they were perfectly willing, if any in profession with them, under pretence of being led by the spirit, should violate in their conduct those plain principles of morality and righteousness so generally recognised, and to which the scriptures abundantly bear testimony, such conduct should be con-

demned as a delusion of the devil. Since, the principles of righteousness being immutable, and the revelations of the spirit, "as they proceed purely from God," always in accordance with those principles, the spirit's "motions *never can* contradict one another, *though they may appear to be contradictory* to the blind eye of the natural man, as Paul and James seem to contradict one another."

Here again we are brought back by Barclay to the evidence of the spirit in the mind, as the highest standard of both faith and practice, since "to the blind eye of the natural man the scriptures may appear to be contradictory," and, agreeably to his former strong and clear positions, it is "by the inward testimony of the spirit we do alone truly know them." And although "there wants not a majesty in the style, a coherence in the parts, a good scope in the whole," "these things are not discerned by the natural, but only by the spiritual man." And again, "when we doubt of the streams of any river or flood we recur to the fountain itself," &c.

The truth plainly is, as before shown from Barclay's own positive declaration; this trial of doctrine and practice by the scriptures, admitted by him, was a matter of condescension to those who, not being in a state to recognise the only true and infallible decider and judge of controversies, in his revelations to the mind, would "try them by this medium."

I have often been astonished at the confidence with which the passage from Barclay under notice,

has been brought forward by those who, with thy correspondent, claim to be his legitimate successors, in order to set the scriptures above the spirit, or to make the impression, that agreeably to Robert Barclay, the record of the revelations made to the righteous in past ages, is to be esteemed as more certain and of higher authority to us than the present revelations of God's spirit to our own minds !—and this too, in the face of the many clear and unequivocal passages associated with it in his apology, in everlasting contradiction to such an idea. But enough, I trust, has been said on this subject to satisfy every dispassionate reader.

I had intended to notice the other quotations of thy correspondent from Barclay, which in my view are given with similar unfairness and equally pervert his meaning. I had also intended to notice his absurd scheme of total depravity of human nature, and show its inconsistency with free salvation to a voluntary agent, but having already extended these observations beyond the limits contemplated, I must leave the reader to examine for himself with regard to the first; and as respects the last, the views advanced are too great an approximation to the dark ages—too palpable a retrograde move, I think, to obscure the vision of many in the present epoch of the religious world. I am unwilling to close, however, without a few remarks in relation to the allegations of John Wilkinson, that this doctrine of Robert Barclay and the Society of Friends, “while it professes to uphold the scriptures as

heavenly and divine writings, virtually destroys their authority by setting above them the spirit," &c. : and "that inward and immediate revelation as Friends understand it, is an utter fallacy," which, "when calmly and patiently examined by the light of holy scripture, will be found to lead directly to Deism," or something worse ; "Deism with a fallacious gloss thrown over it," &c.

Such allegations are calculated to excite our pity for the writer. So far from the doctrine of inward, immediate, divine revelation invalidating the scriptures, it is, as already stated, the only basis on which their truth can be established. And this Robert Barclay abundantly evinces in his *Apology*, and is a truth, as he also shows, virtually admitted by all. One argument of his, in addition to those which have been given, may not be inapplicable here, viz.—"That which all professors of Christianity, of what kind soever, are forced ultimately to recur unto, when pressed to the last ; that for and because of which, all other foundations are recommended, and accounted worthy to be believed, and without which they are granted to be of no weight at all, must needs be the only, most true, certain, and immoveable foundation of all Christian faith. But inward, immediate, objective revelation by the spirit, is that which all professors of Christianity, of what kind soever, are forced ultimately to recur unto, &c. Therefore, &c." The assumption contained in this argument, he proves by reference to

the practice of both Papists and Protestants, and in conclusion pertinently remarks, "it is strange then, that men should render that so uncertain and dangerous to follow, upon which alone the certain ground and foundation of their own faith is built; or that they should shut themselves out from that holy fellowship with God, which only is enjoyed in the spirit, in which we are commanded, both to walk and 'live.'"—Prop. of Im. Rev. p.

That inward and immediate revelation is the only means of certainty in religion, must, on sober reflection, I should think, be obvious to every mind. Had we not an original ground of truth within ourselves,—a law of righteousness, written, not with pen and ink, but by the spirit of Jehovah on the living tablets of the heart, we could not possibly know the truth of any one declaration in the scriptures; much less could we decide between the conflicting examples of doctrine and practice which meet our notice, amid the extended pages of that deeply interesting volume. Take for illustration but one case,—and an important case it is,—what but this could enable us to decide between the code of Moses and that promulgated by Jesus?—to prefer the purity of the precepts of the latter to the morality recognised by the former, and some of that exemplified in the practice of the patriarchs who preceded?

When the blessed Jesus says, "ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the

Lord thine oaths. But *I say* unto you, swear not at all." "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil," &c. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies," &c. When he tells the Jews, in a certain case, "Moses, on account of the hardness of your hearts gave you that precept, but from the beginning it was not so." When Moses and Jesus are thus brought into positive conflict with each other, how should we know which to accredit or prefer, had we not a rule of right and wrong within ourselves, independent of external authority,—a law written in legible characters on the soul by the Creator himself? Both Moses and Jesus, as regards external evidence, present themselves to us with like claims to our attention; both as messengers from heaven,—accompanied too with the sanction of miracles. Yet we give credence to the mild and beneficent, and equitable precepts of Jesus, while we admit the sanguinary, vindictive, and partial code of Moses to be abrogated. And why?—Because the doctrines of Jesus are in accordance with the precepts of the divine law written in the heart, while those of Moses are not. We adopt without hesitation the maxim, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," while we turn with repulsive feelings from the statute of Moses, "Thou shalt consume

all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them." Deut. vii, 16. We reverence the sentiment, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," while the soul revolts at the language of David, "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and *dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*"—Ps. 137, 8, 9. And why this difference of estimate?—why does the mind give a ready acceptance to the one, while it recoils from and rejects the other? Because these precepts of Jesus are in agreement with those immutable principles of righteousness included in that universal law, dispensed by the Creator to all his rational children, and which is the ground of their accountability to him, as it is the foundation of their knowledge of what he requires of them—the only possible ground of certainty in religion.

And instead of this principle leading to deism, as alleged by John Wilkinson, it is in all its characteristics and effects precisely the reverse, while the consequences charged on it by J. W., are strikingly referable to the principle which he advocates. For what is the very essence of deism, but a disbelief that Almighty God ever made any immediate revelation of himself and his will, to the minds of men. Those therefore who acknowledge both that God formerly did and now does reveal himself and

his will to the minds of his accountable children, and act sincerely in conformity with this revelation, cannot surely be chargeable with deism. They acknowledge God in all their ways, and in all his divine and unchangeable attributes. But those who declare that he formerly did so reveal himself, but that such an administration of his spirit no longer exists, are, I think, fairly chargeable with adopting a principle which, if *examined in the light of truth*, will be found to "lead directly to deism," and which must necessarily, indeed, land those who practically adopt it, at least *half way* into deism, and that too, "deism with a fallacious gloss thrown over it." For while the deist denies that God ever did reveal his will to men, except through the medium of the outward creation, from which we must guess it out; these professed Christians admit that he once did reveal his will immediately to men, but assert that he has now ceased to do so, having committed his will to writing in the scriptures; like the deist, leaving men, without any ground of certainty in religion, to guess out the meaning of scripture as they may; and all this guess work under the fallacy of the certain way to divine knowledge!—Seriously, this is the worst half of deism, inasmuch as the *present* revelations of God to us, are, in the reason and nature of the case, of unspeakably more importance than a *history* of his revelations made to others.

Oh! that men were wise, that they would duly appreciate and gratefully accept the gifts of a gra-

cious God, as they are bestowed from his all-bountiful hand, and not, through infidelity of his gifts, deprive themselves of the blessings intended for them! Has he spread abroad throughout the habitable globe, wherever man has been placed, all that is necessary to sustain his natural life, and endowed him with intelligence to augment and apply it, and has he been less munificent respecting his spiritual wants?—Does he teach the sparrow how to preserve its brief existence—what to select for food, and when and where to migrate for safety—and is he less regardful of the immortal mind of man?—“Are not ye of more value than many sparrows?” Let all, therefore, with humble and reverent confidence repose in his goodness, and mercy, and wisdom, and entire sufficiency to supply all the wants of his children, and to enable them to answer all the high and glorious ends of their being. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.”

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*Extract from Barclay's Apology, Second Section of the Third Proposition—alluded to in J. Wilkinson's Letter.*

Page 71, 8th Edition.

§ 2. Though then we do acknowledge the Scriptures to be very heavenly and divine writings, the use of them to be very comfortable and necessary to the Church of Christ, and that we also admire and give praise to the Lord, for his wonderful pro-

vidence in preserving these writings so pure and uncorrupted as we have them, through so long a night of apostasy, to be a testimony of his truth against the wickedness and abominations even of those whom he made instrumental in preserving them, so that they have kept them to be a witness against themselves; yet we may not call them the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the first adequate rule of faith and manners; because the principal fountain of truth must be the Truth itself; *i. e.* that whose certainty and authority depends not upon another. When we doubt of the streams of any river or flood, we recur to the fountain itself; and having found it, there we desist, we can go no farther, because there it springs out of the bowels of the earth, which are inscrutable. Even so the writings and sayings of all men we must bring to the Word of God, I mean the Eternal Word, and if they agree hereunto, we stand there. For this Word always proceedeth, and doth eternally proceed from God, in and by which the unsearchable wisdom of God, and unsearchable counsel and will conceived in the heart of God is revealed unto us. That then the Scripture is not the principal ground of faith and knowledge, as it appears by what is above spoken, so it is proved in the latter part of the proposition; which being reduced to an argument, runs thus:

That whereof the certainty and authority depends upon another, and which is received as truth because of its proceeding from another, is not to be

accounted the principal ground and origin of all truth and knowledge :

But the Scripture's authority and certainty depend upon the Spirit by which they were dictated ; and the reason why they were received as truth is, because they proceeded from the Spirit :

Therefore they are not the principal ground of truth. To confirm this argument, I added the school maxim *Propter quod unumquodque est tale, illud ipsum magis est tale*. Which maxim, though I confess it doth not hold universally in all things, yet in this it doth and will very well hold, as by applying it, as we have above intimated, will appear.

The same argument will hold as to the other branch of the proposition, *That it is not the primary adequate rule of faith and manners* ; thus,

That which is not the rule of my faith in believing the Scriptures themselves, is not the primary adequate rule of faith and manners :

But the Scripture is not, nor can it be the rule of that faith by which I believe them, &c.

Therefore, &c.

But as to this part, we shall produce divers arguments hereafter. As to what is affirmed, that the *Spirit*, and not the *Scriptures*, is the rule, it is largely handled in the former proposition ; the sum whereof I shall subsume in one argument, thus,

If by the Spirit we can only come to the true knowledge of God ; if by the Spirit we are to be led into all truth, and so be taught of all things ; then the Spirit, and not the Scriptures, is the foundation

and ground of all truth and knowledge, and the primary rule of faith and manners :

But the first is true, therefore also the last.

Next the very nature of the Gospel itself declar-eth that the Scriptures cannot be the *only* and *chief rule of Christians*, else there should be no difference betwixt the *law* and the *Gospel* ; as from the nature of the new covenant, by divers Scriptures described in the former proposition, is proved.

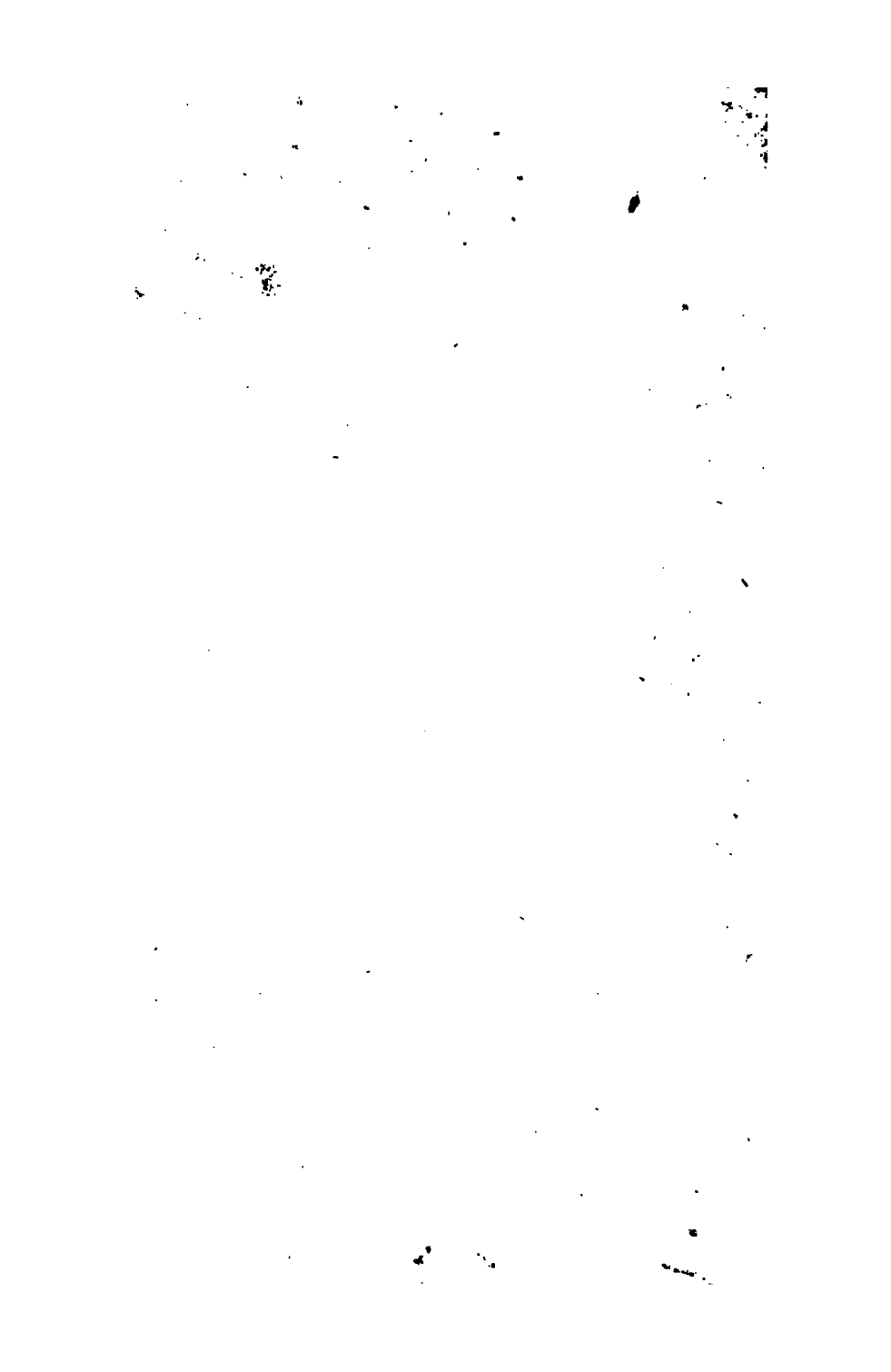
But besides these which are before mentioned, herein doth the *law* and the *Gospel* differ, in that the *law*, being outwardly written, brings under *condemnation*, but hath *not life* in it to *save* ; whereas the *Gospel*, as it declares and makes manifest the evil, so, being an inward powerful thing, it gives power also to obey, and deliver from the evil. Hence it is called (from the Greek,) *glad tidings*. The *law*, or *letter*, which is without us, *kills* ; but the *Gospel*, which is the *inward* spiritual *law*, gives *life* ; for it consists not so much in words as in virtue. Wherefore such as come to know it, and be acquainted with it, come to feel greater power over their iniquities than all outward laws or rules can give them. Hence the Apostle concludes, *Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace*. This grace then that is *inward*, and not an *outward* law, is to be the rule of Christians. Hereunto the apostle commends the elders of the Church, saying, *Acts xx. 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his*

*grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* He doth not commend them here to outward laws or writings, but to the *word of grace*, which is inward; even the *spiritual law*, which makes free, as he elsewhere affirms, *Rom viii. 2. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* This spiritual law is that which the apostle declares he preached and directed people unto, which was not outward, as by *Rom, x. 8.* is manifest; where distinguishing it from the law, he saith, *The word is nigh thee, in thy heart, and in thy mouth; and this is the word of faith which we preach.* From what is above said, I argue thus :

The principal rule of *Christians* under the Gospel is not an outward letter, nor law outwardly written and delivered, but an inward spiritual law, *engraven in the heart, the law of the Spirit of life, the word that is nigh in the heart and in the mouth.*

But the letter of the Scripture is outward, of itself a dead thing, a mere declaration of good things, but not the things themselves :

Therefore it is not, nor can be, the chief or principal rule of Christians.









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Observations on the articles publis

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